

## **REMARKS**

This paper is responsive to the Office Action mailed February 5, 2003. Presently, claims 1 and 3 to 32 are pending in the application. Claims 1 to 4, 6 to 10, 15 to 17 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over the Bruso U.S. Patent No. 4,636,472. Claims 5, 11 to 14, 18 to 21, 23 and 24 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claims 25 to 32 are added by the present amendment to round out the scope of protection. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection and requests reconsideration and reexamination of the application.

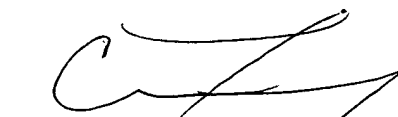
The Examiner has objected to claims 5, 11 to 14, 18 to 21, 23 and 24 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has so amended the claims.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 to 4, 6 to 10, 15 to 17 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Bruso. Bruso shows a sterilizer having a chamber, wrapped trays of instruments and a wrapped biological indicator test pack. In the rejection, the chamber itself represents the "first space" in Applicant's claimed invention. To clarify that the "first space" is not a sterilization chamber in the sense of Bruso, Applicant has amended the claim to emphasize the diffusion of the antimicrobial agent into the container from the area around the container. The container itself is within the chamber, not the chamber itself. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims 1 and 15, and the other claims of the rejection which depend therefrom, patentably distinguish over Bruso.

Claims 25 to 32 have been added to round out Applicants scope of protection. Additional amendments have been made to several claims to correct misuse of the term "area" where the term "space" was intended and thereby provide a correct antecedent basis for the claims terms.

Applicant submits that the application is presently in condition for allowance and requests favorable review and early notice of allowance of the application.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. Farmer', is written over a horizontal line.

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